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FOR NEA/ARP AND INR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/30/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: A CHANGE OF GOVERNOR IN ADEN UNLIKELY

Classified By: DCM Angie Bryan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Responding to rumors that the Governor of Aden is in danger of being replaced, Assistant Deputy Foreign Minister Khalid al-Akwa told poloff on November 26 that rumors about leadership are rare in Yemen and a leak of this kind would usually quickly be followed by a decision. As no decision has yet been made, al-Akwa said it is unlikely there will be any change.

¶2. (C) Al-Akwa was responding to a question from poloff, who had been told by editor of independent newspaper al-Ayam Basha Bashraheel on November 19 that the ROYG is considering replacing Aden Governor Ahmed Kohlani. Kohlani, who was previously Mayor of Sana'a, is purported to be a close relation by marriage to the President. He has family ties to important business interests in Yemen. Bashraheel, a long-time observer of Adeni politics, speculated that President Saleh was considering two candidates for the governorship of this important region:

Ahmed Hamoud Taher al-Qubati is a former member of parliament and an out-spoken critic of corruption. He belongs to the Islamic Islah party and is from the Mawiyah district of the Taiz governorate.

Dr. Saleh Ali BaSura is currently the Minister of Higher Education. He has served as President of Sana'a University and Aden University. He is from Hadramout Governorate.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: Kohlani's connections make him unlikely to be pushed aside. If replaced, he might be made a cabinet minister or given another governorate. President Saleh's presence in Aden to negotiate with the leaders of recent southern discontent may have contributed to this rumor. Kohlani has thus far been unable to subdue his turbulent Governorate. (Note: Although at unification the ROYG promised Aden would be the winter capital of Yemen, on less than five occasions have the cabinet and President Saleh actually moved there. Saleh has been ruling the country from Aden since mid-October; it is unclear when he will return to Sana'a. End Note.) On the other hand, Saleh is a master showman and negotiator and is not above floating a rumor such as this if he thought it might give him some advantage in dealing with unhappy southerners.

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